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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

**DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH  
IN  
HAMILTON-WENTWORTH**

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH  
WITH OTHER ONTARIO REGIONAL  
MUNICIPALITIES**

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present a comparative analysis of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth with nine other Regional municipalities with respect to a variety of indicators which are relevant to the determinants of health within a population. As a conceptual base for the selection of indicators for this analysis, a recent report by the Premiers Council on Health, Well-Being and Social Justice was utilized. This report, entitled *Nurturing Health*, provided an overview of the most recent literature pertaining to those factors which have been shown to have a profound effect on the health status of the population.

Although the concept of health determinants may suggest the focus of the work will be upon traditional health concepts, to the exclusion of social service issues, this is not the case. *Nurturing Health* is an integration of health and social policies within one policy model. Consequently, the areas of analysis include variables from a variety of sectors.

The primary factors highlighted in the current analysis were as follows

1. Work hierarchy and organization
2. Unemployment
3. Child Health
4. Social networks
5. Motor vehicle accidents
6. Air pollution
7. Mental health
8. Health choices
9. Social rank

Each is discussed in more detail within the body of the report.

Four sources were utilized to provide the comparative data -- the 1991 Census, the 1990 Ontario Health Survey, the social indicators database from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and air quality information from the Ministry of Environment. We want to acknowledge the invaluable assistance provided by the Health Priorities and Analysis Unit in accessing the results from the Ontario Health Survey and the co-operation received from the local MCSS Ministry of Environment offices.

This document is not a strict application of the *Nurturing Health* in the Region because the data available did not cover all determinants. Instead it is an overview of the general dimensions. As in all analysis of this kind there are limitations with respect to data availability. Appendix A outlines the limitations of the data used.

The report concludes with a discussion of results and the implications of these results for priority-setting in Hamilton-Wentworth.

## WORK HIERARCHY AND ORGANIZATION

Work hierarchy and organization has been found to have a profound effect upon the health status of populations. In large hierarchical organizations, the health status of employees generally improves with each level of the hierarchy. Although the reasons for this phenomenon have not been clearly identified it has been suggested the level of stress that arises with diminished control over one's job at lower levels of the hierarchy may be a critical factor. Senior managers, for example, tend to have more control over how they carry out their duties and their future tends to be less dependent upon the feelings and perceptions of persons "above them" in the hierarchy.

"Studies have found that men with stressful jobs and little-decision-making authority are more likely to develop high blood-pressure and to die from heart-attacks than those who have more freedom to make decisions. Employees in low status jobs that experience few opportunities for learning and decision-making are more likely to smoke (the main preventable cause of cancer and heart disease.)." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. 12)

Two indicators from the Ontario Health Survey, occupational grouping and the size of workplaces serve as useful point of comparison between Ontario's regional municipalities:

1. The Pineo-Porter-McRoberts Scale measures occupations on a scale which reflects occupational status and prestige. Consequently, the "top" occupations on the scale tend to reflect the hierarchical ordering of jobs in our economy. For this paper, the proportion of respondents who occupied the top three occupational categories on the scale (self-employment, employed professionals, high-level managers) were compared between the ten municipalities.
2. Assuming large companies are more likely to be hierarchical in nature than small ones, the size of the companies was compared between communities.

Hamilton-Wentworth reported fewer people in high ranking occupations than nine of the other communities. Hamilton-Wentworth also ranked relatively low with respect to the proportion of respondents employed in small organizations of twenty or less persons.

These results suggest that the work organization and work hierarchy may be more of a factor in our community than in most other Ontario regional municipalities.

**Pineo-Porter-McRoberts Scale: Percent of Population Self-Employed, Employed Professionals and High Level Managers**

Municipality	Index
Ottawa-Carleton	20.9
Halton	14.7
Toronto	13.7
York	12.6
Waterloo	10.0
Niagara	9.4
Haldimand-Norfolk	9.4
Sudbury	9.1
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Durham	9.0

Source: Ontario Health Survey

**Size of Workforce: Percent of respondents employed in organizations employing less than twenty persons**

Municipality	Index
Haldimand-Norfolk	38.7
Sudbury	29.8
Niagara	29.7
York	25.3
Waterloo	24.8
Toronto	24.1
Durham	23.6
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Halton	22.2
Ottawa-Carleton	19.8

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## UNEMPLOYMENT

"Unemployment is bad for your health. Not only does it mean reduced income it can also mean a loss of self-esteem...One Canadian study found that unemployed people reported more distress, anxiety, health problems, visits to a physician and hospital stays than the employed. People who had been low income to begin with reported more anxiety and depression than unemployed high-income earners." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. 7)

Levels of unemployment, then, have major impacts upon the health of populations. As unemployment rises, so does the incidence of a variety of physical and mental health problems.

For the purposes of this analysis, three different measures of unemployment were utilized from the 1991 census- female unemployment rates, male unemployment rates and youth unemployment rates.

Hamilton-Wentworth ranked high on all three measures. Among the regional municipalities, Hamilton-Wentworth ranked first with respect to male and youth unemployment and ranked third on female unemployment.

It is noteworthy that the level of unemployment has fallen in Hamilton-Wentworth, since the 1991 census. More updated figures on the same geographical basis as cited above are not available although Hamilton's ranking among Ontario cities has improved. Based on the three month average for July to September 1994, Hamilton ranked ninth on total unemployment among the ten Ontario cities for which data was available.

## Unemployed Females as a Percentage of the Labour Force, 1991

Municipality	Index
Halton	6.3
York	7.0
Haldimand-Norfolk	7.1
Ottawa-Carleton	7.1
Durham	8.2
Waterloo	8.7
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>8.8</b>
Toronto	9.1
Sudbury	9.1
Niagara	9.3

Source: 1991 Census

## Unemployed Males as a Percentage of the Labour Force, 1991

Municipality	Index
Halton	5.8
York	5.9
Haldimand-Norfolk	6.7
Ottawa-Carleton	6.9
Durham	7.0
Sudbury	8.2
Waterloo	8.7
Niagara	9.2
Toronto	10.0
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>10.7</b>

Source: 1991 Census

## Youth Unemployment

Unemployed persons aged 15 to 24 as a percent of the labour force 15 to 24 1991

Municipality	Index
Halton	10.7
Haldimand-Norfolk	10.7
York	11.3
Ottawa-Carleton	11.3
Waterloo	13.7
Durham	14.0
Niagara	14.1
Toronto	14.6
Sudbury	15.2
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>16.0</b>

Source: 1991 Census

## Total Unemployment

July - September 1994

Municipality	Index
Thunder Bay	11.6
St. Catharines-Niagara	10.8
Sudbury	10.4
Toronto	10.3
Oshawa	10.0
Windsor	9.5
London	9.0
Ottawa-Hull	8.1
Hamilton	8.0
Kitchener-Waterloo	7.5

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

### **BETTER BEGINNINGS: CHILD HEALTH**

"Children born to poor parents are more likely than those in high-income families to have low birth rates, eat less nutritious foods, have difficulty in school and eventually drop-out of school." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. )

To a very great extent, the foundations for healthy adult functioning are laid down during the years of childhood and youth. Deficiencies that arise during those periods can be difficult to "make up" during adult years. Consequently, there is an increased emphasis upon healthy childhoods as a key determinant of health.

For the purpose of this analysis, a number of indicators were employed-

1. The proportion of low-income families
2. Children in poverty in single-parent families.
3. Children-in-care and children on Family Benefits Assistance
4. School drop-outs
5. Youth and education

In general, the Region did not perform well on these measures. Among the ten municipalities, Hamilton-Wentworth recorded the highest rate of poverty in lone-parent families, the second highest rate of low income families, children on FBA, and school drop-outs. The proportion of youth in school full-time is lower than eight other municipalities. Of the "children-in-care", only Waterloo and Sudbury reported higher rates.

## Children In Poverty With Single Parents

Percentage of children (0-19) who live in low-income lone-parent families, 1986

Municipality	Index
York	1.89
Halton	3.02
Durham	3.96
Haldimand-Norfolk	4.07
Ottawa-Carleton	5.95
Waterloo	6.17
Niagara	7.72
Sudbury	8.13
Toronto	8.54
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>9.02</b>

Source: MCSS Database

## Proportion of Families With Income Below the Statistics Canada Low-income Cut-off

Municipality	Index
Halton	5.3
York	6.3
Haldimand-Norfolk	7.2
Durham	7.3
Waterloo	9.6
Niagara	10.5
Ottawa-Carleton	10.9
Sudbury	11.7
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>14.8</b>
Toronto	16.3

Source: 1991 Census

Children on Family Benefits Assistance  
 Percent of Children (0-15) Supported by FBA Payments 1991

Municipality	Index
York	2.93
Halton	2.94
Durham	7.03
Ottawa-Carleton	7.93
Haldimand-Norfolk	8.07
Waterloo	9.81
Toronto	10.83
Sudbury	10.40
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>11.08</b>
Niagara	12.70

Source: MCSS Database

Percent of Secondary School Students Who Left School  
 Without Earning a Diploma 1987/1988

Municipality	Index
Ottawa-Carleton	8.53
York	9.74
Sudbury	10.15
Niagara	11.16
Haldimand-Norfolk	11.21
Halton	12.69
Durham	14.00
Waterloo	14.76
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>15.24</b>
Toronto	22.48

Source: MCSS Database

## Percent of Population Aged 15 to 24 Who Are In School Full-time 1991

Municipality	Index
York	65.4
Sudbury	65.1
Halton	62.7
Ottawa-Carleton	61.2
Niagara	59.8
Haldimand-Norfolk	58.4
Durham	58.2
Toronto	57.6
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>55.8</b>
Waterloo	55.4

Source: 1991 Census

## Number of Children (0-17) In Substitute Care Arranged By the Children's Aid Society Per 10,000 Children, 1989

Municipality	Index
York	.42
Halton	.42
Durham	.47
Haldimand-Norfolk	.50
Niagara	.67
Ottawa-Carleton	.87
Toronto	.97
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>1.05</b>
Waterloo	1.06
Sudbury	1.09

Source: MCSS Database

## SOCIAL SUPPORTS

"The support we get from family and friends from birth throughout life is an important determinant of a healthy long life. Now research supports this- indeed, family and friends appear to be as important to health as traditional factors such as blood pressure and diet." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. 18)

Social supports can take a variety of forms- family, friends and self-help groups are a few examples- and there are limitations to the amount of comparative data that is available on this topic. For the purpose of this analysis, four indicators were utilized which focused, primarily, on the family as a source of social support.

1. Family Emotional Support: The Ontario Health Survey asked respondents whether or not there were family members they could turn to for support during times of crisis.
2. Dysfunctional Families: A measure of family functioning was developed, based on questions in the Ontario Health Survey.
3. Elderly persons living alone: The number of elderly persons living alone in the community was tabulated as a proportion of the total elderly population from the 1991 Census. This group may be at risk for social isolation.
4. One-person households: the number of one-person households, as a percentage of all households, was tabulated from the 1991 Census.
5. Marital Status: The number of persons who were separated, widowed or divorced as a percentage of the adult population was tabulated from the 1991 Census.

Hamilton-Wentworth ranked quite high with respect to seniors living alone (third) and one-person households (third). The Region ranked second with respect to the proportion of the adult population who was widowed, divorced or separated. These results suggest that "social isolation" could be an important factor within the Region.

With respect to family emotional support, six of the ten municipalities had a larger proportion of their population who reported that they could not rely on their families during times of crisis. Family supports seem relatively strong in this Region. However, the local area had the third highest proportion of respondents who scored in the dysfunctional range on a scale of family functioning.

## Percent of Seniors Living Alone

Municipality	Index
Sudbury	30.3
Ottawa-Carleton	29.7
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>28.9</b>
Waterloo	28.1
Haldimand-Norfolk	27.9
Toronto	27.6
Niagara	27.3
Durham	24.4
Halton	23.5
York	18.3

Source: 1991 Census

## One-Person Households As a Percent of Total Households

Municipality	Index
Toronto	27.4
Ottawa-Carleton	25.3
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>24.1</b>
Niagara	21.5
Sudbury	21.3
Waterloo	20.1
Haldimand-Norfolk	18.7
Halton	15.3
Durham	14.3
York	10.3

Source: 1991 Census

## Percent of Population 15 and Over Who Are Widowed, Separated or Divorced

Municipality	Index
Niagara	16.4
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>16.2</b>
Toronto	15.5
Sudbury	15.0
Ottawa-Carleton	14.8
Haldimand-Norfolk	14.3
Waterloo	13.8
Durham	13.2
Halton	12.0
York	9.8

Source: 1991 Census

## Family Emotional Support

Percentage of Respondents Who Cannot Count on Family Members in Times of Crisis

Municipality	Index
Ottawa-Carleton	8.5
Sudbury	8.3
Haldimand-Norfolk	6.8
York	6.6
Niagara	6.3
Waterloo	6.3
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Toronto	6.1
Halton	5.7
Durham	5.5

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Dysfunctional Families

Percentage of respondents in "dysfunctional" range on family functioning scale

Municipality	Index
Halton	17.8
Waterloo	19.2
York	19.4
Ottawa-Carleton	20.0
Durham	20.5
Haldimand-Norfolk	22.1
Toronto	22.2
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Niagara	26.1
Sudbury	27.5

Source. Ontario Health Survey

## AIR POLLUTION

"The health effects of air pollution are well documented. In southern Ontario, for example, researchers have found a clear link between respiratory problems, the temperature and the levels of sulphate and ozone in the air." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. 15)

For the purposes of this analysis, data was obtained from the Ministry of the Environment pertaining to three aspects of air quality:

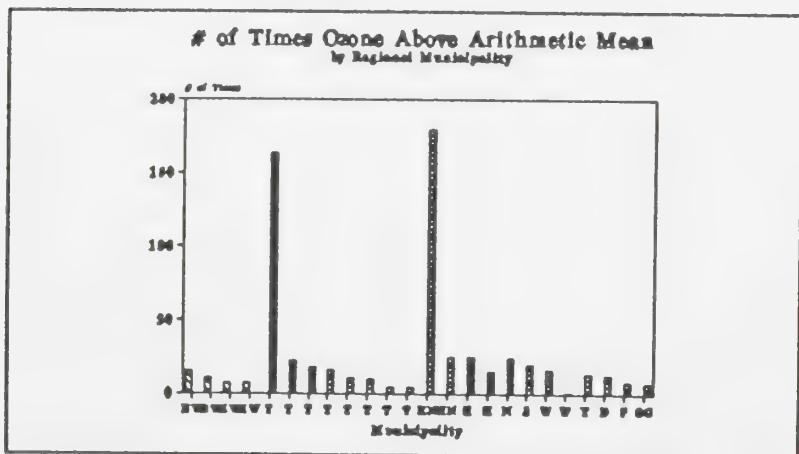
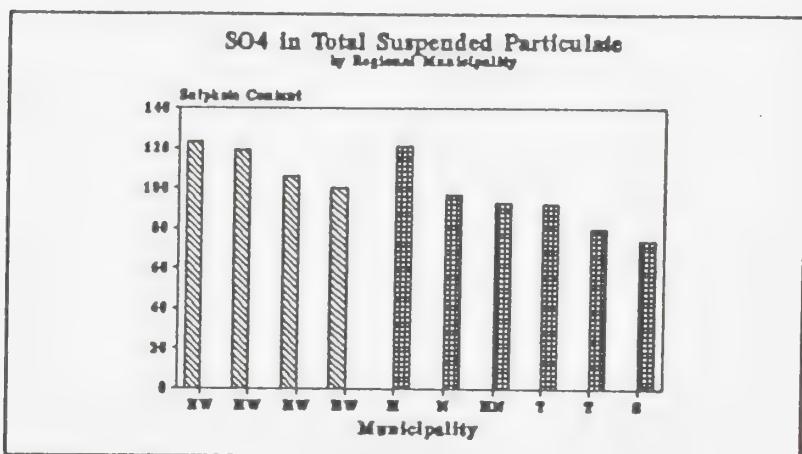
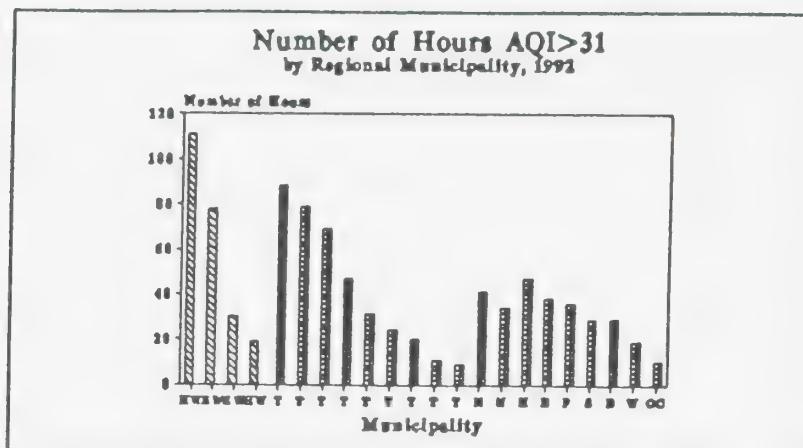
1. The amount of  $\text{SO}_4$  (sulphate) in total suspended particulate.
2. The number of times ozone readings were above the arithmetic mean.
3. The number of hours the air quality index was above 31 (the upper limit of "acceptable air quality").

There are four air monitoring stations in Hamilton-Wentworth. Individual data was provided for each.

Data received from the Ministry of the Environment are included in this report and can be interpreted using, the following key:

HW	Hamilton-Wentworth
H	Halton
N	Niagara
HN	Haldimand-Norfolk
T	Toronto
S	Sudbury
W	Waterloo
D	Durham
O	Ottawa-Carleton

In general, these figures confirm ongoing concerns about local air quality. The four monitoring stations in Hamilton-Wentworth ranked within the top five with respect to suspended particulate and two of the monitoring stations ranked in the top four with respect to the number of hours that the air quality index exceeded a reading of 31. It is noteworthy, however, that, ozone levels were generally lower than those at the other sites.



### **MOTOR VEHICLE INJURIES**

As a leading cause of death and injury in Ontario, the incidence of motor vehicle accidents in an area is an important determinant of the level of health within the resident population. For the purposes of this report, two sets of data were employed from the results of the Ontario Health Survey:

1. The average number of respondents who reported involvement in an automobile accident during the year prior to the survey.
2. The results of a "driving safety score" which was computed on the basis of responses to related items.

Although Hamilton-Wentworth reported a relatively low incidence of accidents, the Region had second lowest with respect to the driving safety score on scale where higher scores are reflective of safer driving habits.

## Average Number of Car Crashes in the Past Year

Municipality	Index
Durham	.018
York	.0221
Haldimand-Norfolk	.0241
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>.0307</b>
Waterloo	.0322
Toronto	.0324
Ottawa-Carleton	.0331
Niagara	.037
Halton	.0447
Sudbury	.0449

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Driving Safety Score

Municipality	Index
Haldimand-Norfolk	13.01
Niagara	12.93
Sudbury	12.92
Durham	12.89
Halton	12.81
Ottawa-Carleton	12.76
Toronto	12.73
Waterloo	12.71
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>12.65</b>
York	12.56

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health indicators are a key element of community health levels. Three indicators from the Ontario health Survey were utilized:

1. An overall measure of respondents "well-being"
2. The reported incidence of suicidal thoughts during the previous year
3. The reported incidence of suicide attempts during the previous year.

Hamilton-Wentworth ranked third in the proportion of respondents who rated their "well-being" as low and sixth with respect to suicidal thoughts and attempts.

## Personal Well-Being

## % Of Respondents Rating Personal Well-Being as Low

Municipality	Index
Halton	14.3
Durham	14.4
Ottawa-Carleton	16.7
Waterloo	17.3
Haldimand-Norfolk	17.7
York	18.0
Niagara	18.8
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>20.1</b>
Toronto	20.2
Sudbury	22.5

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Percent of Respondents Reporting Suicidal Thoughts During the Past Year

Municipality	Index
Durham	2.6
Toronto	3.1
York	3.3
Halton	3.4
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Waterloo	4.3
Niagara	4.5
Sudbury	4.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	4.9
Ottawa-Carleton	5.4

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Percentage of Respondents Reporting Suicide Attempt During the Past Year

Municipality	Year
Durham	.2
Halton	.3
Ottawa-Carleton	.4
York	.5
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>.5</b>
Toronto	.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	.7
Sudbury	1.1
Niagara	1.1
Waterloo	1.2

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## **HEALTH CHOICES**

Within the determinants of health framework, "health choices" refers to the various life-style issues affecting personal levels of health and well-being. For the purpose of this analysis, a number of relevant areas from the Ontario Health Survey were utilized for this component of the analysis- smoking behaviour, alcohol consumption, illicit drug use, body-weight and levels of physical activity.

Relative to the other regional Municipalities, Hamilton-Wentworth yielded the highest proportion of respondents with a "problem-drinking" score on alcohol consumption and an unsafe weight. The Region had the fourth highest concentration of smokers and the fifth highest concentration of respondents who scored in the "inactive" range on physical activities. Hamilton-Wentworth respondents ranked sixth with respect to their reported use of illicit drugs.

Percentage of respondents who scored in "problem-drinking" range on Michigan Alcohol Screening Test

Municipality	Index
Halton	3.5
York	4.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	5.6
Sudbury	6.3
Ottawa-Carleton	6.3
Toronto	6.4
Durham	6.6
Waterloo	6.9
Niagara	7.1
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>7.9</b>

Source: Ontario Health Survey

Percentage of Population With Body Mass Index of 20-25 (Safe)

Municipality	Index
Ottawa-Carleton	51.4
Halton	50.5
Toronto	50.3
York	49.9
Durham	48.9
Waterloo	48.8
Haldimand-Norfolk	47.0
Niagara	46.7
Sudbury	45.7
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>42.0</b>

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Percentage of the population who reported smoking daily

Municipality	Index
Toronto	14.7
York	14.7
Halton	16.3
Ottawa-Carleton	18.0
Niagara	18.9
Waterloo	19.3
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>20.2</b>
Haldimand-Norfolk	22.6
Sudbury	25.0
Durham	25.8

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Percentage of respondents in the "inactive" range of Physical Activity Index

Municipality	Index
Ottawa-Carleton	58.8
Halton	67.4
Durham	68.1
Waterloo	68.8
York	68.9
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>70.4</b>
Haldimand-Norfolk	71.1
Sudbury	72.5
Toronto	73.2
Niagara	73.4

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## Illicit drug use among persons aged 12-65, 1990

Municipality	Index
Halton	4.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	5.0
York	5.9
Durham	6.2
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Toronto	6.5
Ottawa-Carleton	7.3
Waterloo	7.4
Sudbury	7.7
Niagara	8.0

Source: MCSS Database

## SOCIAL RANK

"Income is a powerful determinant of health. This is true all the way up the income scale. People in the top income bracket are healthier than middle-income earners, and the middle-class is healthier than low-income earners. That is, the poorer people are, the less healthy they are likely to be." (*Nurturing Health*, pg. 7)

Social rank in our society is determined by a number of different factors and historically, there has been a correlation between income, education and occupation. In this analysis, four indicators were utilized for comparison:

1. The number of respondents from the Ontario Health Survey who were placed in the "unskilled" occupational categories on Pineo-Porter-McRoberts Scale (low occupational status).
2. Median male and female incomes from the 1991 Census.
3. The incidence of low income from the 1991 Census.
4. The incidence of low educational attainment from the 1991 Census.

Hamilton-Wentworth ranked low on the indicators of income, poverty and education, and in the mid-range with respect to occupational status.

## Median Female Income, 1991

Municipality	Median Income
York	19,274
Ottawa-Carleton	18,974
Toronto	17,990
Halton	17,665
Durham	16,888
Waterloo	14,977
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>13,813</b>
Sudbury	12,555
Haldimand-Norfolk	12,198
Niagara	12,152

Source: 1991 Census

## Median Male Income 1991

Municipality	Median Income
Halton	35,722
Durham	34,553
York	34,186
Ottawa-Carleton	31,375
Sudbury	29,197
Waterloo	28,344
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>27,964</b>
Niagara	27,892
Toronto	26,168
Haldimand-Norfolk	25,546

Source: 1991 Census

## Percentage of Families Below Low-Income Cut-Off

Municipality	Index
Toronto	16.3
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>14.8</b>
Sudbury	11.7
Ottawa-Carleton	10.9
Niagara	10.5
Waterloo	9.6
Durham	7.3
Haldimand-Norfolk	7.2
York	6.3
Halton	5.3

Source: 1991 Census

## Percent of Unattached Individuals Below the Low Income Cut-off

Municipality	Index
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>41.3</b>
Sudbury	35.9
Toronto	33.5
Niagara	33.3
Ottawa-Carleton	32.0
York	30.2
Waterloo	29.1
Durham	27.1
Halton	26.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	23.4

Source: 1991 Census

## Percent of the Population (15 and over) With Less Than Grade Nine Education

Municipality	Index
Halton	5.6
Ottawa-Carleton	6.5
Durham	7.5
York	9.2
Waterloo	12.1
Niagara	12.7
Toronto	13.2
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>13.6</b>
Sudbury	14.6
Haldimand-Norfolk	15.3

Source: 1991 Census

## Percentage of Respondents in Unskilled Occupational Categories in Pineo-Porter-McRoberts Scale

Municipality	Index
York	13.0
Toronto	16.6
Halton	17.4
Durham	18.6
Ottawa-Carleton	19.5
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth</b>	<b>20.2</b>
Waterloo	20.8
Sudbury	23.3
Haldimand-Norfolk	23.3
Niagara	24.1

Source: Ontario Health Survey

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this overview suggest there are clusters of health determinants which should be addressed, on a priority basis, by interventions within Hamilton-Wentworth. These clusters are summarized briefly below.

### 1. Economic/Educational Determinants

Relative to the other regional municipalities, Hamilton-Wentworth experienced above average problems with unemployment, poverty and education. The relationship between these dimensions is strong and an area which experiences problems in one of these components is likely to experience problems in the others.

### 2. Family Functioning

The relatively high concentration of dysfunctional families in the local area and the relatively high concentration of children-in-care suggest that the issue of family stability and supports is of key importance in discussions of service priorities.

### 3. Social isolation

High concentrations of widowed, divorced and separated persons, as well as persons living alone, suggest that the problem of social isolation, as a determinant of health, is an issue that should be addressed within discussions of priorities.

### 4. Job Control

The relatively low concentration of persons in "high-control" employment and in small businesses within the Region suggests that the issue of work hierarchy and organizations may be an important issue in Hamilton-Wentworth, relative to other municipalities.

### 5. Obesity and Alcohol Consumption

Among the various "lifestyle" determinants included in this analysis, obesity and problem-drinking arose as priorities with respect to Hamilton-Wentworth's position relative to the other regional Municipalities.

The data which have been examined give impressions based on individual factors. The Premiers Council and other documents suggest that these factors are not isolated. It is useful then to look at some combined measure of these data. The following table shows the number of times each municipality had a ranking in the top five and the bottom five. This gives a relative ranking of more and less "well".

## Summary of Comparative Indicators\*

Municipality	Times More Well	Times Less Well
Durham	24	8
Halton	19	13
Hamilton-Wentworth	5	27
Niagara	8	24
Ottawa-Carleton	20	12
Sudbury	7	25
Toronto	8	24
Waterloo	16	16
York	29	3

- \* 1. Includes all discussed data except Natural Environment Indicators and 1994 Unemployment Data which were not available for all 10 Regional Municipalities.
- 2. Maximum possible score in each column: 32.
- 3. More Well indicates the number of times the community's index was in the top five of the compared communities. Less Well indicates the number of time the community's index was in the bottom five of the compared communities.

The data reviewed here suggest Hamilton-Wentworth is a community under stress in comparison with others in the province. It suggests the need to undertake comprehensive efforts to address issues, as the factors which affect health are now recognized to be very broad. There are several planning activities in this community. Some examples include:

- AATD's Children's Services Review (1994),
- Hamilton-Wentworth Region's Sustainable Development initiative (ongoing) and the Health and Social Services Priority Setting Process (1993),
- SPRC's Community Trends Documents (annual)
- The District Health Council's Mental Health Plan and Long Term Care Planning,
- The Hamilton Foundation's Community Review,
- The United Way's Priority Setting review for Design and Development funding, and
- The Ontario Training and Assistance Board (OTAB) planning for training and labour force adjustment.

More planning activities are planned for the future. For example, the Ministry of Community and Social Services intends to become involved in community consultation and planning at the local level as part of its activities in the coming year.

While the determinants of health have been demonstrated to be very broad, community based planning activities have been somewhat more narrowly focused. This document illustrates the need for an integrated planning process which draws these components together as we move to address the challenges our community faces.





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